

REMARKS

Applicant thanks the Examiner for the thorough consideration given the present application. Claims 1-4, 9-16 and 19-26 are currently being prosecuted. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider his rejections in view of the amendments and remarks as set forth below.

Entry of Amendment

Applicant submits that the entry of the present Amendment is proper and is respectfully requested. The present Amendment includes the cancellation of claims 5-7, 17 and 18 which clearly does not involve any new issues. At the same time, claim 21 has been added which is a combination of claims 1 and 8 which also does not raise any new issues since it is only the rewriting of a dependent claim in independent form. Claims 22-26 merely repeat claims 2-4, 9 and 10, but depend from new claim 21. Thus, Applicant submits that no new issues are caused by this addition either.

Applicant is submitting an amendment at this time in order to limit the issues on appeal. Thus, claims have been cancelled and dependent claims have been rewritten in independent form. Under these circumstances, Applicant submits that entry of the Amendment is appropriate and is respectfully requested.

Rejection Under 35 USC 103

Claims 1-20 stand rejected under 35 USC 103 as being obvious over Takahashi et al. (U.S. Patent 5,903,239) in view of Stopperan (U.S. Patent 5,719,749). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Applicant previously submitted remarks concerning this rejection in the response of March 15, 2006. Applicant submits that these comments also apply to the current set of claims. Applicant will supply further arguments in the Appeal Brief in due course.

Conclusion

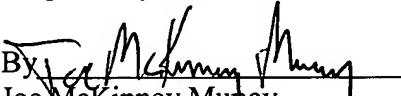
Applicant submits that the present Amendment is proper for entry and that the claims distinguish over the prior art.

If the Examiner has any questions or comments, please contact Robert F. Gnuse, Reg. No. 27,295 at the offices of Birch, Stewart, Kolasch & Birch, LLP.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

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Respectfully submitted,

By 

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